

NUMBER OF TAX PAYERS.

Mr. McCOMAS submitted the following order :

Ordered, That each delegation from the counties and the city of Baltimore, designate some member or members thereof to ascertain the actual number of tax payers in each county and city aforesaid, and report the same to the Committee on Representation, as early as practicable.

Mr. BERRY of Prince George's. It appears to me that the object of that order will be better reached by making the request of the several clerks to furnish the number. It would be a very laborious duty for members of the Convention to go home and look over the assessment books of their several counties. The clerks of the several counties may very properly furnish them. I heartily approve the object of the inquiry, but would prefer that the request should be made of the clerks.

Mr. McCOMAS. I presume the case will be that the members will request the clerks to furnish them. That would be the most expeditious way.

The order was adopted—ayes 32 ; noes 28.

Mr. ABBOTT. It is suggested by some gentlemen that it will be some expense to procure this list from the counties ; and that it would be better to make an appropriation for that purpose.

The PRESIDENT. I do not know what power the Convention has to appropriate money.

Mr. ABBOTT. What power has the Convention to call upon the clerks of the different counties for the list ?

Mr. CLARKE. I would suggest that some member who voted in favor of the order move a reconsideration.

Mr. PUGH. I move a reconsideration.

The motion to reconsider was agreed to.

Mr. BERRY of Prince George's. I move the postponement of the subject, to enable us to look into the subject of the expense. I took it for granted that at the request of the Convention the clerks of the several counties would furnish the information. But it is a work of great labor, and some of them may not do it. We would better act knowingly on the subject.

Mr. McCOMAS. I see no necessity for a postponement. I obtained the information from my county merely by corresponding with the clerk of commissioners. I wrote a few days ago, and he at once sent me the statement. I suppose it could be done by correspondence, and the expense would not be very great. The commissioners would furnish it upon a respectful application without any expense being incurred.

Mr. PUGH. I understand the object of the motion to postpone to be to enable members of the Convention to ascertain that fact from the clerks of commissioners. If they are willing to furnish the information without cost, I should have no objection at all to

getting in that way. But if it is to be an expense, it is certainly very important that we should know how much the expense will be before we act upon it. By a postponement we shall have time to ascertain the fact.

Mr. MILLER. I think the information the gentleman from Harford (Mr. McComas) requires can be obtained from the census of the United States, which was very full, giving the amount each person is worth in all the counties of the State, if there has been a full return of the census published. The mere abstract in our hands, I agree, will not give us the information we seek. I think it can be obtained from the Census Department in Washington without any difficulty, so far as the State of Maryland is concerned. And if that can be obtained in printed form and distributed among members of the Convention, it will be much better than calling upon the various counties. It certainly is information which I should like to obtain as well as any other member of the body ; but I do not think the clerks of our various counties would go to the trouble of making out a list on a mere request, unless there was some compensation to be given. I am in favor of the motion to postpone until we can ascertain whether the clerks will do it without pay or not.

Mr. HENKLE. I understand the order to be an inquiry relating to the number of tax payers in the different counties, and not requiring a list of the tax payers in the different counties. If a list is required, it would impose a heavy duty upon the clerks ; but to give the number simply would involve a very small amount of labor. It can be done in an hour in any county of the State. The clerks surely will not object to performing that labor, even gratuitously. I ask if it is expected to have a list of the tax-payers, or simply the number.

Mr. McCOMAS. The object is to get simply the number, and not the names of the tax-payers. With regard to the Census Bureau, in Washington, any person familiar with the manner in which the last census was taken, is well aware of the imperfection of it ; and certainly every State may have a better report from its own officers. Besides, I wish to obtain the actual number this day, and not the number four years ago.

Mr. CLARKE. As this may be the beginning of orders calling for various information I would merely suggest that the proper mode would be for the House to adopt some order of this character, that its officers shall obtain the information, and that the work shall not be imposed upon members. Furthermore, with regard to the expense, whatever expense should be incurred would be paid out of the appropriation fund provided for the Convention, upon being authorized by the Committee on Accounts, without requiring